

U.S. Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

P.O. Box 48148
Seattle, WA. 98148
March 1, 2018

RE: 10-Year Rate System Review
Docket No. RM2017-3
Order No. 4258

Dear Commissioners,

I am submitting a supplemental statement to you as a 31-year postal employee and a local union official, on behalf of my co-workers. As I stated in my first submission, dated February 28, 2018, it is my opinion that the changes proposed to rate-setting are an improvement, but do not go far enough in allowing the Postal Service to adjust rates to raise needed funds for infrastructure improvement and equipment upgrades.

This statement is specifically about the effects of underfunding at my own workplace, the Wallingford Station Post Office in Seattle, and the negative impacts of underfunding on its operations.

I learned today from a co-worker that two expenditure requests for this station have been denied. Both would have restored working conditions to previous levels.

At Wallingford Station, parcels are sorted in a large basement area that also doubles as a parking space for some of the delivery vehicles. It is accessed through a large freight elevator. The ramp for the vehicles to enter the building is open to the outside air. During the winter the basement can get very cold.

For many years there has been a large industrial curtain which blocked the flow of air from the outside when the ramp was not in use. That prevented the basement temperature from getting as cold as the outside air. With a space heater, conditions were tolerable.

However, that curtain eventually wore out, and had to be discarded. In the coldest days of winter, temperatures are well below freezing, especially in the early morning hours when most parcel-sorting is done. The request for a replacement curtain was denied. Now a single, ineffective space heater in the corner of the large sorting area is the only source of heat, and bundling up is the only recourse.

In addition, Wallingford Station has long had an electric pallet jack, very useful both for speed and for safety. We often get pallets of mail weighing well over one thousand pounds. In the winter of 2016-2017, I believe, during the peak mail season, the elevator broke and was not repaired for several weeks. The electric pallet jack was used to haul pallets of parcels from the dock, down the ramp to the basement. At some point it broke, and a replacement was sent. That, too, broke recently. Both are sitting in the basement, unrepaired.

Apparently, the request for an electric pallet jack was denied, and we will be getting an old-fashioned manual pallet jack as a replacement. It appears that for budget reasons we are going backwards in terms of out operating equipment and working conditions.

Summary

I have witnessed the inefficiencies and service issues which stem from insufficient postal revenue, which the rate cap put in place by the 2006 PAEA exacerbated. I believe the Commission's proposal is an improvement, but is too limited. It does not give the Postal Service sufficient flexibility to make rate increases where necessary, to generate capital to maintain infrastructure and invest in modernizing technology, and to maintain financial stability.

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